

# Action In The Street: A Guide to Performing & Archiving Public Exchange

Disclaimer: This guide and its contents are not responsible for any actions of its users. This guide intends to share information and create dialogue around this subject. This information is meant to be realistic in terms of risk and how to create public street performance art. This guide is a working document that invites a variety of approaches and viewpoints around this topic. *Safety for yourself, your body, and others is critical and should not be overlooked.*



Fig. 1 - David Ian Bellows/Griess. *RESTORATION AREA*. Camera Operator Elizabeth Lamb. 2019.

## I. Performance

- a. Research what you are planning to do: consider a statement or purpose of what you are doing and attempting to convey
- b. Come up with a series of actions
- c. Understand the difference between performing inside and outdoors. What and how are the variables different or the same? (crowds/public/weather conditions/state/local laws /etc.)

## II. Equipment

- a. Camera or phone? Use your own or source
- b. Operation: get someone who knows how chosen equipment functions or be willing to teach/various online tutorials
- c. Storage and battery life: enough memory (storage space) and batteries for your action.
- d. Remember to charge your device(s) the evening before

### III. Personnel

- a. Have at least one other person present (camera operator). Preferably a small group (strength in numbers/protection/extra eyes/witnesses)
- b. Consider delegating roles (Documenter, Witness, or Public Interface) Example: maybe there is a printed component to your piece, and you want someone to hand out flyers, or you have someone who explains what is happening as it is happening to the public

### IV. Site

- a. Know what your terrain looks like before the performance during the time of day you wish to perform. Take pictures to understand the scale and the relationship between the site and bodies within the space, ie, how does it look/safety concerns for you and others
- b. Scout multiple locations if possible

### V. Know Your Rights **\*\*You may have to interface with an authority figure(s)\*\***

- a. Study state and local laws Example: NY laws: anti-mask<sup>1</sup>, blocking the street (included under disorderly conduct)<sup>2</sup>, & busking<sup>3</sup>
- b. Have a script and be prepared to tell that to an authority figure if they ask
- c. Not everyone may like your performance or approve (how to navigate difficult/adverse reactions from the public)

### VI. Execute

- a. Have plan try to stick the plan but know that not everything is in your control
- b. If something does not feel right **cancel it** (weather conditions, you get to the site and something is off, or the situation becomes too challenging to continue)
- c. Safety for yourself and others is essential and should not be overlooked

### VII. Archive

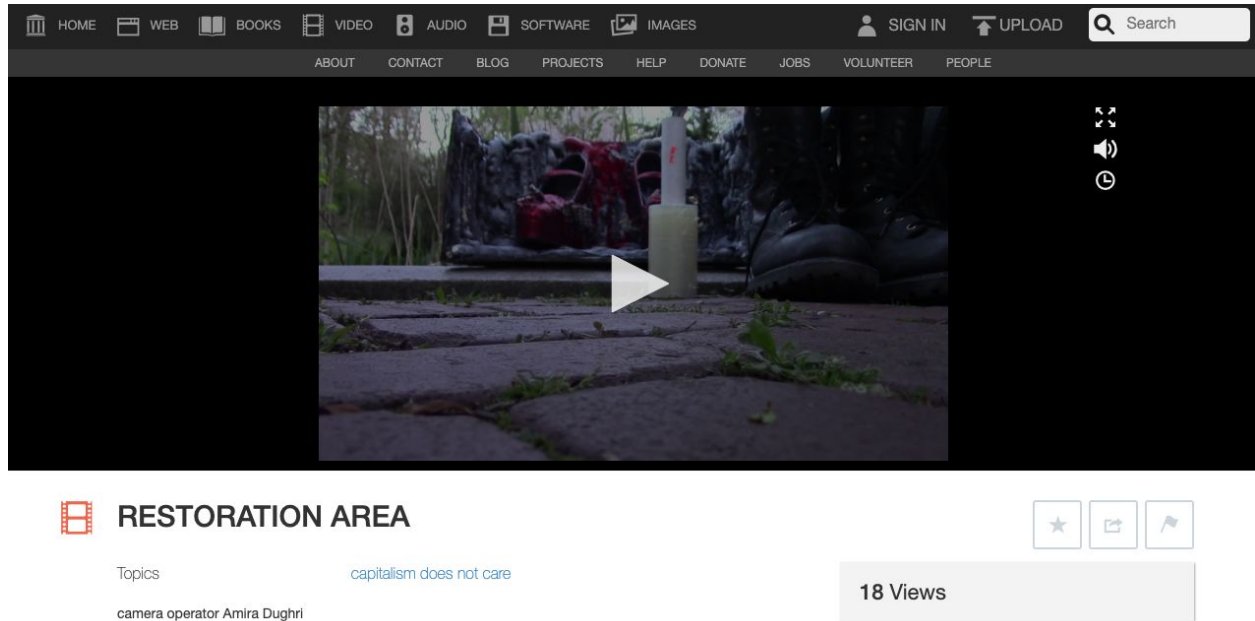
- a. Transfer the digital media created: images, video, interviews, etc. to computer
- b. Create and store multiple copies of your digital files
- c. Consider publishing to the web (archive.org or alike) tagging metadata and writing a statement

---

<sup>1</sup> NY State Senate. "Loitering," November 9, 2019. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PEN/240.35>.

<sup>2</sup> NY State Senate. "Disorderly Conduct," November 9, 2019. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PEN/240.20>.

<sup>3</sup> "Rules of Conduct." <http://web.mta.info/nyct/rules/SubwayPerformerRules.htm>.



*Fig. 2 - Video documentation of RESTORATION AREA. Camera Operator Amira Dughri. 2019.  
Screengrab from archive.org.*

## Works Cited:

American Civil Liberties Union. "Rights of Protesters."

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech/rights-protesters>.

Information on the First Amendment (Free Speech) and the rights protestors in the United States are granted and how to navigate rights violations.

"Buskers, Street Performers, Street Artists, Law, Legal, History, Urban Studies."

<http://www.buskersadvocates.org/>.

International busker advocacy group information, resources, and links.

Hallas, Herb. "New York's Anti-Mask Law And Civil Unrest." The Adirondack Almanack, October 31, 2013.

<https://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2013/10/new-yorks-anti-mask-law-civil-unrest.html>.

The history of New York states anti-mask law.

NY State Senate. "Disorderly Conduct," November 9, 2019.  
<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PEN/240.20>.

Details on New York State's Disorderly Conduct Law.

NY State Senate. "Loitering," November 9, 2019.  
<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PEN/240.35>.

New York State's loitering law that includes an anti-mask law: Section 240.35(4).

"OpenArchive." <https://open-archive.org>.

A tool for sharing sensitive video and other digital media from a mobile device through encryption, which provides security to its users

RESTORATION AREA. <http://archive.org/details/restorationarea>.

Video documentation of a public performance art action.

"Rules of Conduct." <http://web.mta.info/nyct/rules/SubwayPerformerRules.htm>.

Rules for Subway Performance provide by the MTA of New York.

Sonicbids. "Taking It to the Streets: Need-to-Know Info on Busking in New York City."  
<http://blog.sonicbids.com/taking-it-to-the-streets-nyc-busking-basics>.

Blog post with information and links to how to understand and abide by New York Busking Laws.

White, Shirley A. *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower*. New Delhi; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003.

Documentation of the process to create participatory video and a collaborative process of video making and documenting.

WITNESS. "WITNESS Resources." <https://www.witness.org/resources/>.

Social justice advocacy organization providing guidance on filming, documenting, archiving, and publishing a video. With a focus on creating and disseminating evidence of human rights violations.